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General Assembly
Sixtieth session

Official Records

First Committee
17th meeting
Friday, 21 October 2005, 10 a.m.
New York

Chairman: Mr. Choi ..... (Republic of Korea)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda items 85 to 105 (*continued*)

Thematic discussion on item subjects and the introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions submitted under all disarmament and international security agenda items

The Chairman: As I announced yesterday, because of my strained voice, I will ask a Vice-Chairperson, Mrs. Gabriela Martinic, to chair this meeting. I shall chair the informal meeting, scheduled to start at 12 noon.

Mrs. Martinic (Argentina), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

The Acting Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): As agreed, this morning the Committee will first hold an informal interactive discussion on disarmament and non-proliferation education. For this segment the Committee will hear presentations from two invited guests. Before we get down to today's work I shall suspend the meeting for the informal interactive discussion.

The meeting was suspended at 10.10 and resumed at 11.05 a.m.

Mr. Fraser (Canada): I would like to speak briefly about Canada's activities in the field of disarmament education.

Canada has long supported the contributions of civil society, academics and non-governmental organizations (NGO) to broadening our understanding of disarmament and non-proliferation challenges and to the promotion of our objectives in the field of nuclear arms control and disarmament. Disarmament education is therefore a key dimension of our broader efforts in that area.

In recognition of the depth of knowledge and expertise in the Canadian academic and NGO communities, Foreign Affairs Canada hosts annual consultations with civil society, covering a range of topics such as nuclear challenges and new non-proliferation mechanisms, missile proliferation controls and defences, chemical and biological weapons, verification and compliance issues, the global partnership programme and space security. Our delegations to recent preparatory committees and review conferences of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) have all included representatives of civil society. Canada provides funding to NGOs to convene expert-level consultations and supports efforts at reaching critical will to ensure wide public access to national statements and other documents emanating from meetings of United Nations disarmament bodies.

The International Security Research and Outreach Programme (ISROP) of Foreign Affairs Canada serves as a focal point in Canada for regional research and assessment relevant to international security issues, including non-proliferation, arms control and

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disarmament, verification and confidence-building measures. The Programme draws together in-house capabilities, resources from other Government departments and a network of expertise from the academic community and other knowledgeable individuals from Canada and abroad.

As part of its outreach activities, in March 2005, ISROP helped to establish the Canadian Centre for Treaty Compliance at Carleton University in Ottawa. The Centre's initial focus will be on arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation treaties concerned with weapons of mass destruction. In addition to courses, researchers at the Centre will examine how treaty compliance is monitored and verified, as well as the methods for encouraging, facilitating and enforcing compliance. The Centre will provide academic support for one of Canada's stated foreign policy objectives, namely, to verify compliance with legal regimes designed to reduce the threats associated with weapons of mass destruction.

Another significant ISROP initiative over the last year was the launch of international security internships aimed at providing graduate-level students in international affairs with the opportunity to conduct substantive work on particular ISROP research priorities. Canada supports independent graduate-level research through several doctoral- and master's-level research awards offered in collaboration with the Simons Centre for Peace and Disarmament Studies at the University of British Columbia. The primary objective of those awards is to enhance Canadian graduate-level scholarship on disarmament and non-proliferation issues and to promote the development of centres of excellence in that area.

Most recently, in partnership with the United Nations Association of Canada, my Government sponsored the production of a disarmament education module intended for students and teachers at the secondary school level. Teaching materials can be viewed at www.unac.org. The module has been well received, both by students and educators, and has been well integrated into the broader provincial and territorial curriculums, with a focus on teachers and training.

The Acting Chair: Does any delegation wish to take the floor to introduce draft resolutions?

That not being the case, we have thus concluded the second phase of the work of the First Committee.

Programme of work

The Acting Chair: In accordance with the Committee's programme of work and timetable, the third phase of our work, action on all draft resolutions and draft decisions submitted under agenda items 85 to 105, will begin next week. In that connection, I would like to draw members' attention to the clustering paper contained in document A/C.1/60/CRP.3, which has been circulated to all delegations.

The Committee will begin its work by taking action on the draft resolutions contained in cluster 1, namely, nuclear weapons, on Monday, 24 October. In that connection, I believe that an informal paper contained in the list of draft resolutions that are ready for action in each of the seven clusters has been circulated by the Secretariat.

With the cooperation of members, and on the basis of past practice and precedent, it is my intention to move as efficiently as possible from one cluster to another upon the completion of action on each given cluster. Nonetheless, while following that procedure, the Committee will maintain a certain degree of flexibility. It is also my intention to follow the precedent set during past sessions in proceeding with action on all draft resolutions. Consequently, during the decision-taking stage of each individual cluster, delegations will first have the opportunity to introduce draft resolutions with regard to any particular cluster.

We still have a number of draft resolutions that must be introduced. I would therefore kindly request the delegations that plan to introduce the remaining draft resolutions to be as brief as possible when doing so. In addition, delegations wishing to make general statements or comments, other than explanations of vote on the draft resolutions contained in a specific cluster, will be permitted to do so. Thereafter, delegations will be provided the opportunity to explain their positions or votes in a consolidated statement on all draft resolutions and draft decisions contained in a particular cluster, before the Committee proceeds to take action on them one after another and without any interruption in between. In other words, delegations will have the chance to explain their positions or votes in a consolidated fashion on all draft resolutions contained in the specific cluster on which action will be taken.

I intend, with the full cooperation of the Committee, to strictly follow that procedure, in order

to ensure the full and efficient utilization of the time and conference resources allocated to the Committee. That is something with which I strongly believe all members of the Committee fully concur. Consequently, I appeal to all delegations strictly to observe that procedure and to avoid any interruptions once voting on cluster begins. Once the Committee completes action on all draft resolutions and decisions contained in a particular cluster, delegations wishing to explain their positions or votes after the voting will be allowed to do so. However, as in the case of consolidated explanations of vote before the voting, delegations are again requested to provide consolidated explanations of their positions after the voting on those respective draft resolutions of the given cluster on which action was completed.

I would also like to stress that, in accordance with the rules of procedure, sponsors of draft resolutions are not permitted to make any statements in explanation of their votes, either before or after action is taken. They will, however, be permitted to make only general statements at the beginning of the meeting on a particular cluster.

In order to avoid any misunderstandings, I strongly urge those delegations seeking recorded votes on any particular draft resolution to kindly inform the Secretariat of their intention as early as possible before the Committee begins to take action on any individual cluster.

Finally, concerning the postponement of action on any draft resolution, I urge all delegations to inform the Secretariat in advance, at least one day before action is taken on the draft resolution. However, every effort should be made to refrain from resorting to a deferment of action.

In order to ascertain that every delegation fully understands the procedure for the action phase, the Secretariat has prepared an information sheet similar to the one circulated last year regarding the ground rules for taking action on draft resolutions. I believe that that paper has already been distributed this morning.

Let me also remind the Committee that, once we have completed action on all disarmament-related draft resolutions and decisions, we will still need to set aside time for the consideration, and action on, the draft resolution on the question of Antarctica. The Committee will also have to consider, and take action on, its tentative programme of work for the sixty-first session.

With the Committee's agreement, it is my intention to follow the procedure that I have just outlined during the third, and last, phase of our work. Unless I hear any objection, I shall take it that the Committee agrees with the procedure that I have just outlined.

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 11.20 a.m.